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Contamination in Animas River continues to decrease

DENVER – The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reports initial test results on the Animas River show the concentration of contaminants from the Gold King Mine continues to decrease.

“While we know monitoring needs to continue, we are encouraged to see decreasing contamination in the river as shown by our recent analysis,” said state health department director and chief medical officer Dr. Larry Wolk. “CDPHE will continue to sample water in Cement Creek and the Animas River daily. We recognize the importance of the Animas River to communities in southwest Colorado and beyond.”

The department does not anticipate adverse health effects from incidental or limited exposure to metals detected in the water. However, the department advises people to avoid contact with yellow- or orange-colored water and sediment. Wash skin with soap and water after contact. Please continue to follow the advisories issued by the [La Plata County Sheriff’s Department](#) and [San Juan Basin Health Department](#). Anyone who is concerned about their exposure should contact their healthcare provider or the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (1-800-222-1222).

The department continues to take samples to analyze river water, drinking water, sediments and the yellow-orange substance coating the stream banks. Lab results take 24 hours from the time of receipt at the lab. Samples are being flown from Durango to the state lab in Denver, and scientists are working overtime on these prioritized samples.

Samples are analyzed for contaminants typically found in mine drainage, such as pH, hardness and metals. We will post data, recommendations and additional information on our [website](#).

CDPHE will continue to coordinate closely with the San Juan Basin Health Department and the EPA.

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